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ABSTRACT

No single comprehensive student services delivery model exists, and "student services" terminology remains problematic. The Office of Student Services has defined student services as those services provided by educational institutions to facilitate learning and the successful transition from school to work, military, or more education. To be effective, services must be drawn from all the resources of the school and community, available to all students, provided on an individual basis as needed, and coordinated to ensure that all students receive the necessary services. In addition to the basic services that have been deemed essential to facilitating student success (including counseling, food, child care, transportation, special accommodations, safety/security, medical/nursing, social work/social, and psychological services), various services are essential to facilitating students' success at the following stages of their secondary school lives: before enrollment (recruitment/outreach, assessment, orientation, career exploration/awareness); during enrollment (assessment, academic advising, career awareness/exploration/planning, tutoring, mentoring, job placement/referral); and post enrollment (job placement/referral, follow-up/evaluation). Although there is no single "best" approach to providing essential student services effectively, professionals specializing in providing the various types of services can form teams and observe eight basic guidelines for building a student services system. (MN)

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Office of Student Services'

BRIEF

Volume 7, Number 2

IMPROVING STUDENT SERVICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by Carolyn Maddy-Bernstein and Esmeralda S. Cunanan

Comprehensive, coordinated student services enhance opportunities.

While many believe an excellent faculty and a rich curriculum are the necessary components to improving student outcomes, there is another area often overlooked by reformers — a comprehensive, coordinated student services system designed to enhance every student's chance for success. The means must be found to help all students move successfully from one educational level to the next and/or from school to work and lifelong learning. An efficient and comprehensive student services delivery system will help attain this goal. This BRIEF provides the rationale for such a system and describes the wide range of services high schools need to provide. A second BRIEF in 1996 will provide information about a coordinated student services delivery system. (This BRIEF is adapted from an NCRVE CenterWork article currently in press.)

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Background

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) of 1994 supports providing *all* students equal access to the full range of program components, including recruitment and enrollment activities. The Act also places emphasis on improved career guidance and counseling services and the necessity for students to select a career major by the 11th grade. These and other services must be improved to strengthen the transition process. For example, all students will profit from career counseling; child care and transportation services allow single parents and teen parents to take advantage of their educational opportunities; job placement services assist students in their job search and also support good matches of students and employers; follow-up services improve programs; and student assessment helps all students understand their strengths.

In January 1995, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education reorganized its Office of Special Populations to become the Office of Student Services (OSS). Their work began by conducting a literature search to identify (a) the full range of student services represented in secondary schools and (b) the best models for effectively delivering these services. (Contact the OSS for a summary of the literature review.)

Surprisingly, the literature review *failed to uncover a single listing of all student services* one might expect to find in a secondary institution. Furthermore, the literature search *revealed no comprehensive student services delivery models.* While the literature is replete with information about student services, most references center on models for delivering services to students enrolled in special education, or services for other students considered to be at risk, or models for career development and guidance and counseling services.

Terms associated with student services:

- *student affairs*
- *student personnel*
- *student development*
- *support services*
- *supplemental services*

Furthermore, even the "student services" terminology is problematic. Several terms are associated with and/or used interchangeably with student services. For example, *student affairs, student personnel, student development,* and *support services* are associated with student services in the literature. In addition, the terms *support services* and *supplemental services* are both used in recent legislation. While *supplemental services* is defined in the legislation (Carl D. Perkins Vocational and applied Technology Education Act, Sec. 521(38)) as "...curriculum modification, equipment modification, classroom modification, supportive personnel, and instructional aids and services," support services is not specifically defined. The Perkins Act indicates *support services* pertain to

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services such as counseling, special transportation needs, English-language instruction, mentoring, child care, and special aids. In the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and in day-to-day practice, the terms are used interchangeably.

What Are Student Services?

In lieu of an acceptable definition in the literature, the Office of Student Services defines student services as those services provided by an educational institution to facilitate learning and the successful transition from school to work, military, or more education. To be effective, services must be:

- drawn from all the resources of the school and community;
- available to **all** students, including those
  - enrolled in college-preparatory programs,
  - enrolled in vocational-technical programs (who may or may not be college-bound), and
  - who are members of special populations;
- provided on an individual basis as needed; and
- coordinated to ensure all students receive the necessary services.

Services should match students' school life stages.

The Office of Student Services (see figure 1) depicts three stages of attendance:

(1) **pre-enrollment** — the period when one is preparing to enroll in a secondary school;
(2) **enrollment** — the period when the student is enrolled; and
(3) **post enrollment** — the period when the student has left the program whether they have advanced to the next level or withdrawn.

Provide basic services during:
- *pre-enrollment*
- *enrollment*
- *post enrollment*

Students require some services during all three levels and others at different stages of enrollment. Of course, each student's needs will be unique. The OSS listing includes **basic services** that should be available during all three stages. Some of these services, such as counseling, food services, transportation services, safety and security services, and medical/nursing services, are often taken for granted by students and parents. Other basic or fundamental services include child care assistance, psychological services, social work/social services, and special accommodations.

During the pre-enrollment stage, students need certain services to facilitate their movement to the next level. Orientation to their new school is very helpful. Appropriate assessment should take place as well as career awareness and exploration activities. Students will benefit from career/educational counseling prior to entering a high school program.

During enrollment, most students will continue to need educational/career counseling including career exploration and awareness, career/transition planning (including financial aid), and additional assessment. Some students will need tutoring, most will benefit from a mentor, and almost all can use academic advisement. Job referral and job placement services help ensure students smooth transition to work.

While early school leavers and graduates traditionally have minor contact with the former institution, many of them would still profit from job referral, job placement, and counseling. There seems to be a growing trend for former students in the **post-enrollment stage** to return frequently to their previous school or college to serve on advisory councils, act as mentors to current students, offer jobs to students, and to provide other assistance.

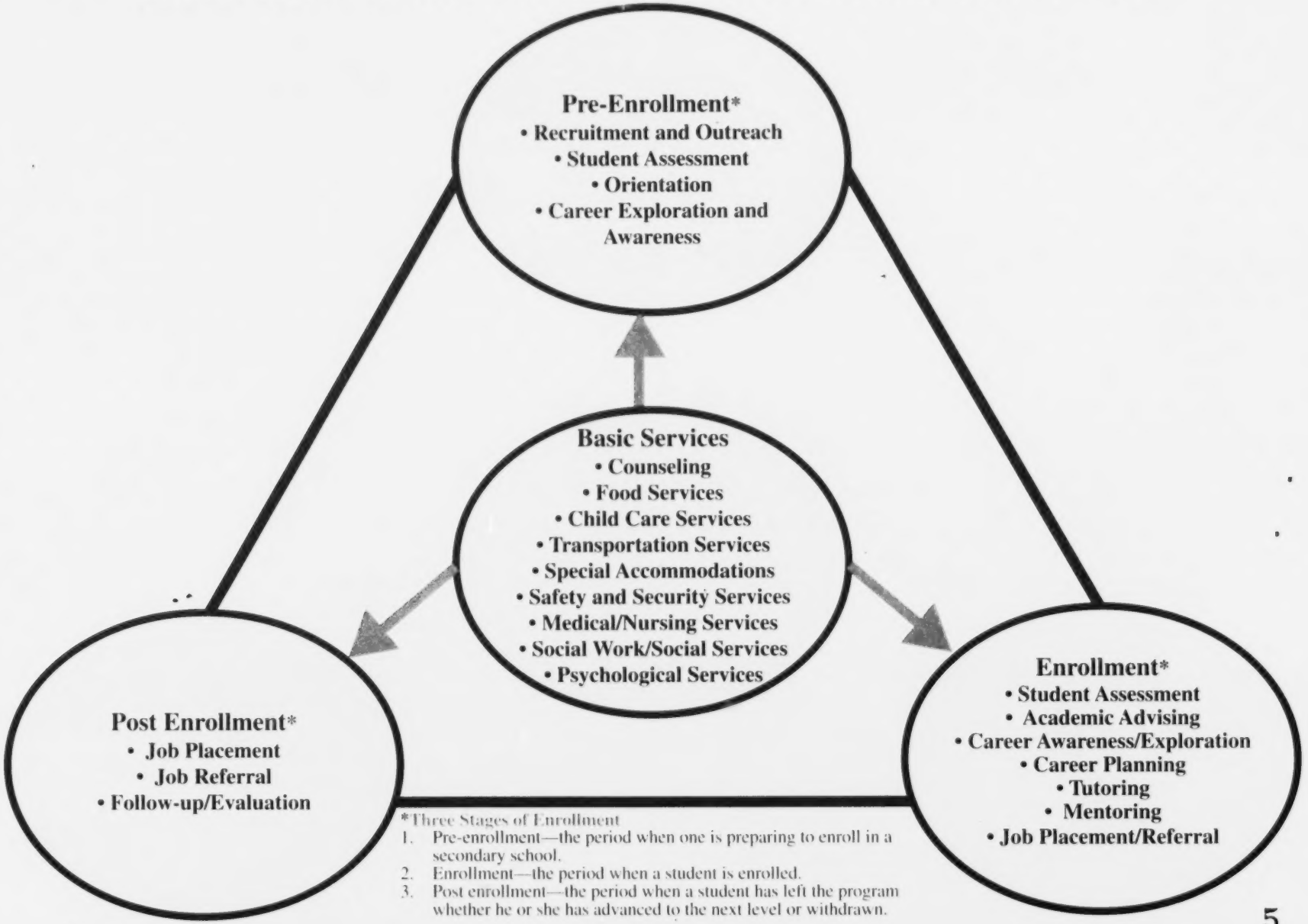
Delivering Student Services

While there is probably no single "best" approach to providing essential student services effectively, the following are some general guidelines that schools can use in building a student services system:

1. Use all available resources, including those in the school, the total school system, and the community. Parents, students, business and industry representatives, school administrators, faculty, counselors, and all school staff, as well as community service providers must work cooperatively and collaboratively.

Figure 1

ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO FACILITATE STUDENT SUCCESS



*Three Stages of Enrollment

1. Pre-enrollment—the period when one is preparing to enroll in a secondary school.
2. Enrollment—the period when a student is enrolled.
3. Post enrollment—the period when a student has left the program whether he or she has advanced to the next level or withdrawn.

2. Assess the needs of *every* student to determine necessary services. Assessment is imperative in determining how to serve students best and avoid duplication of programs and services.

3. Implement a comprehensive management system to ensure all students are receiving needed services.

4. Use the developmental approach. Through this approach, each individual, while progressing through some common growth stages with related needs, is still recognized as unique.

5. Design and conduct staff development activities that will prepare the school and the community for the work ahead. Workshops or seminars can focus on the following topics: how the new system works, curriculum integration, team building, time management, and others.

6. Resolve issues that can impede the implementation of an inclusive student services system (e.g., coordinating several services, providing time for personnel to work together, funding).

7. Conduct on-going evaluation and follow-up for program improvement and to determine student success.

8. Form a student services team (SST). As a team, student services personnel can effectively provide the necessary student services.

What Is The Student Services Team?

Form a team of professionals who specialize in:

- *counseling,*
- *job placement,*
- *consulting,*
- *assessment,*
- *rehabilitation,*
- *career and educational planning, and*
- *other related services.*

The student services team consists of professionals who specialize in providing counseling, job placement, consulting, assessment, and other related services to ensure the career, educational, social, emotional, intellectual, and healthy development of all students. Typically, a student services team consists of the school counselor, social worker, psychologist, nurse, and other related professionals (Schmidt, 1993, p. 35), as well as special education resource teachers, Chapter I teachers, special populations coordinators, assessment specialists, para-professionals, and rehabilitation counselors (Tennessee State Department of Education, no date).

Other school services personnel who should be included on the team are transition specialists, school-to-work coordinators, multicultural services professionals, tutors, academic advisors, job coaches, and recruitment representatives. Local service providers should also be represented. Inclusion of employment, health and social services, welfare, and other community services will further strengthen the team. Representatives from food services, child care, and transportation could meet periodically with the team.

Ideally, student services are centrally located or found in areas with good access. To coordinate the various services, a director is needed. Commitment and collaboration from among the different student services professionals are essential to organizing and implementing a comprehensive student services system. Members of a unified team collaborate with one another to make the various components work as one. They strive toward one goal - to prepare every student for success in careers and lifelong learning.

What Is Ahead?

In 1996, the Office of Student Services will work to encourage systems change so that student services, which are based on the developmental career needs of all students, become an integral part of the eduational process. To learn more about implementing an inclusive student services delivery system, the OSS staff will work with two schools who seek to improve their student services system. Another BRIEF will be published next year highlighting the results of this study.

NATIONAL SEARCH FOR EXEMPLARY CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

For Immediate Release
December 1, 1995

Contact: Dr. Carolyn Maddy-Bernstein
Phone: (217) 333-0807

WHAT: The U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education Office of Student Services, in cooperation with the National Association of State Career Development/Guidance Supervisors and the American Vocational Association will conduct a search for exemplary career guidance and counseling programs.

WHEN: Completed applications must be postmarked no later than March 15, 1996

HOW: Interested individuals from public and private settings and various educational levels (comprehensive high school, specialized vocational high school, secondary level area vocational center, alternative secondary school, postsecondary/technical institute, community college, adult and continuing education agency, K-adult programs) are invited to submit a comprehensive application describing and documenting the components of their career guidance and counseling programs. Completed applications will be reviewed by a national panel of experts in the field and those with the highest rankings will be visited by a team from the search sponsors.

WHY: Programs selected for recognition will be comprehensive, developmental programs designed to serve **all** populations. These programs will be announced in a variety of national newsletters and during national conferences. Information about the programs will be highlighted in U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education's and NCRVE Office of Student Services' (OSS) publications and presentations, and entered into the OSS database of exemplary programs. Through the database, information about exemplary programs is disseminated widely to various individuals, agencies, and other education institutions.

WHO: Those interested in obtaining an application or wishing to learn more about the search should contact:

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The Office of Student Services of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California, Berkeley, is housed at the University of Illinois. The Office of Student Services works nationally to promote the full range of quality programs and services that assist all students (secondary and postsecondary), including members of special populations, to successfully transition from school to work.

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